



DHHS In Focus

DHHS Vision: Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

I Have A Question For You...

In the Commissioner's weekly e-mail to staff on June 17th, she shared the broad outline of the DHHS Strategic Plan with you. The Plan is unfolding. The comprehensive guide for how we do our "business", whether it is delivering service to people, accounting for the dollars we spend, or protecting the health and safety of Maine citizens, is our Governing Principles document, which was shared with you in our first newsletter.

In order to make these concepts real, the Commissioner has developed a question which she hopes we will all think about and ask ourselves, to help each of us view our work through a "single lens". Approximately 4000 people work for the Department of Health and Human Services in many different capacities. One of the ways we can come together to define our purposes, and to speak with **one voice**, is for each of us individually to consider our own answer to this question:

"How am I helping to meet the needs of my customers so that they experience me as responsive, caring, and part of a well-managed organization?"

Please consider this question as it relates to your individual performance, team performance or office performance.

You may find copies of "the question" popping up on your bulletin boards, waiting areas and conference rooms, in all our central and regional offices. We hope it will serve as a reminder, and be a thought-provoking tool as you go about the work you do.

And then we'd like to hear from you! If you'd like to answer the question in writing and forward it to the Commissioner, your responses will be featured in a future newsletter.

Send your response to Commissioner brenda.m.harvey@maine.gov

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Meeting The Commissioner's Staff:

Geoff Green

Deputy Commissioner, Operations and Support

In this ongoing series, we're introducing the staff of the Commissioner's office and helping you get to know what we do. Geoff Green is the Deputy Commissioner for Operations and Support. It's his job to manage the support service functions that enhance service delivery operations and help make them run efficiently and effectively.



Geoff Green

Operations and Support includes the Division of Purchased Services, managed by Marie Hodgdon, and the Rate Setting Unit, managed by Lisa Wilson. It also includes the Division of Regional Operations, directed by Becky Nichols, which provides administrative support services in the regional offices and manages DHHS facilities. The Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services, which includes the Certificate of Need Unit, managed by Cathy Cobb, the Division of Human Resources directed by Don Williams, and the Office of Administrative Hearings supervised by Jim Bivins are also housed within Operations and Support.

These days, Green is focusing on consolidating administrative functions, standardizing policies and supporting the Department's service operations.

Green, who has worked in a variety of settings during his career, has broad experience in the business world as well as nonprofit and government sectors. He spent seven years working for the Central Maine Power Company as, among other things, Manager of Consumer, Regulatory and Competitive Market Services.

From 1980 to 1988, Green was the Executive Director of the York County Community Action Corporation.

"What I would like people to know about me," Green said, "is that my career, coming out of college, began in human services. That is where I intended to do my life's work."

Green believes that the ten years he spent in the business world enhanced his perspective on what we do in the world of human services.

"I guess the thing that the business world taught me is that resources are scarce, that it's important to manage them carefully, and that you can do things you didn't think were possible when you really have to manage to a bottom line. I have come to realize that one way of advocating for the people we serve is to

make sure that we are getting as much as we can out of the limited resources available to us, so that we can provide as much help as possible to the people who really need it.”

Green’s experience has also taught him that customer satisfaction is essential. “Ultimately, no enterprise can succeed, or even survive, if it does not satisfy its customers,” he says, “and customers include both the people you serve, and your investors.” In DHHS’s case, the “investors” are Maine taxpayers, and the “Board of Directors” that represents them is the Maine Legislature.

Green praises the new DHHS governing principles and believes they will have

a major impact on the way this department is working. For one thing, they give all DHHS employees a common frame of reference.

“I think it’s important for people to know that even though this is a very large organization that does many, many different things - we’ve boiled it all down to four major goals for the department.”

1. **Protect** and enhance the health and well-being of Maine people.
2. **Promote** independence and self sufficiency
3. **Protect** and care for those who are unable to care for themselves.
4. **Provide** effective stewardship for the resources entrusted to the department.

“No matter what work you do within DHHS, or where you do it, your work is clearly connected to one or more of those four goals and the single mission we have as a department. In other words, the Department’s mission and goals are what we all share in common. They are what unify us and give us a sense of direction.”

When he’s not putting in long days at his desk Green, who lives with his wife Sharron in Winthrop, likes to ride his motorcycle and fish. He serves as a fast pitch softball umpire, and is a lifelong Red Sox fan.

Thinking Like A Business—by Geoff Green

1. Resources are scarce. As needs increase and new needs emerge, think about redeploying resources from lower priority uses to higher priority uses. It won't always be possible to get additional resources.
2. Understand who your customers are. You may have both internal and external customers. Make sure that your customers would choose to be served by you even if they had a choice.
3. Don't just accept change. Embrace it. Continuous improvement is the hallmark of a healthy organization, and continuous improvement can't occur without continuous change.
4. Challenge the process. Look critically at everything we do, all the time. How can we do things more effectively? How can we achieve cost efficiencies?
5. Understand how your job and all of the things you do in your daily work contribute to meeting the goals of your work group, and the Department. Make sure that everything you do adds value. Eliminate functions and processes that don't add value so that you can devote more time to the things that do.

Fit For Summer; Keep Active And Beat the Heat

For some of us, fitting fitness activities into our busy schedules can be a challenge. When summertime weather makes the thought of working up a sweat even less desirable, the very best-laid fitness plans can go astray.

Maine's brief summer can bring hot, humid conditions, and in some cases, strenuous exercise can be dangerous. When there is high humidity in the air, we are inhaling more water and less oxygen than when humidity levels are normal. It's the equivalent of not breathing enough. And when we engage in cardiovascular exercise such as running, biking, and other exercises that make our hearts pound, we speed up the need to supply oxygen to our muscles. Exercising hard and increasing our bodies' needs for more oxygen when humidity is high can lead to uncomfortable and even dangerous conditions such as lightheadedness, headache, dehydration and in extreme conditions, heat stroke.

The Augusta YMCA has a great way of letting members know

when it's a good day to use caution when exercising.

"We employed a 'flag system' at our Augusta campus", says Trish Hanley-Goodwin, director of Fitness and Membership Services at the KVYMCA. "We have three colored flags—green, yellow and red—at the Welcome Center desk. Similar to stop-light signals, green means GO ahead with your normal workout. Yellow means SLOW down and use caution exercising, and red signals you should STOP excessive cardio exercise until the humidity and temperature return to safe levels."

Dora Mills, MD, Director of the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, agrees with Hanley-Goodwin's recommendations. Not every fitness facility has a flag system though, so how can you decide when to adjust the intensity of your workout to be safe? It's easy, says Dr. Mills.

"Whenever the outside temperature reaches high levels, or the humidity in the air is very high - or both conditions exist,

it is a good idea to cut back your exercise intensity," says Mills. "Check out the DEP Air Quality Forecast at www.maine.gov/dep/air/ozone/index for air quality ratings that are updated daily."

Dr. Mills advises that sometimes you don't need an official warning to make the decision. "Use common sense and listen to your own body as well," says Mills. "If it feels too hot to exercise, it probably is."

Becky Greene, the DHHS Coordinator of Health, Wellness and Safety, has a few other tips for safe summer fitness.

"Summer in Maine is a great time to choose fitness activities that can also naturally keep you cool. Maine's wooded hiking trails provide an excellent shaded place to walk or run, and many bike trails are shaded also."

"And let's not forget the obvious—swimming, either in indoor or outdoor pools or in Maine's beautiful ocean, lakes, ponds and streams, is a great total-body activity and keeps your body cooling at the same time. Don't forget to drink plenty of water before, during and after your summer fitness activities to replace hydration lost through sweating."

The fitness professionals at your health club should be able to advise you about working out in Maine's brief, balmy weather. For more information, check out these websites:

www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/
www.justmove.org
www.mainelung.org



Legislative and Policy Update

Highlights of the "Youth In Care" Conference, 2006

By Lucky Hollander, Director of Legislative Relations

I had the privilege of spending the day at Colby College a couple of weeks ago, attending the 16th Annual Youth in Care Conference. I am often asked to attend such events in all areas of the Department to witness the fascinating intersection of policy and program issues converging. In this case, Kala Clark, the youth leader and foster child who I highlighted in a previous newsletter, asked me to do a workshop with her on advocacy and policy-making. To be honest, she presented and I changed the screen on the PowerPoint!

I was also honored to be given one several annual awards – this one by Region 2 youth for “leadership in improving the lives of youth in care”. Truly, I was embarrassed by this – really truly! I know people are supposed to say this, but as I told the audience, it is for real. When I think about how many staff, volunteers, foster parents, providers and others work tirelessly on behalf of young people, my little part in making sure people know how to work the legislative system, get the right information to the right people at the right time, sit through hours of work sessions, connect with legislative sponsors if a bill is in trouble – all the things that make up the dynamic process of making policy – I am in awe of the “silent and invisible” champions in the Department (and, of course, in the community).

So...in the spirit of sharing with you what I shared that day, I send this award out to the many staff in DHHS that work so hard to be sure young people in care are safe, nurtured, and above all, find permanency whenever possible. We hear a lot about the young people who are a challenge, and who are unable to reach the outcomes we would all like to see, but for the vast majority of youth in care, we can and do make a real difference.

While I do not know the names of all staff who make a difference (some of them have been here for 10 – 20 – 30 years!), I want to mention a few who have helped this office in untold quiet ways in the last year while we struggle to make good policy.

Dan Despard, the Office of Child and Family Services’ Director of Practice and Policy, for getting intricate details for legislators, answering numerous questions and inquiries, and attending hours of hearings and work sessions in a quiet and patient manner.

Ginny Marriner, our Adoption Program Specialist, who is always ready to help give information and to attend hearings at a drop of a hat.

Hugh Sipowicz of the Office of Child and Family Services, for steadfastly advocating for and assisting young people negotiate the changing system as they “age out”.

Jen Hutchins, who I recently met as she tried tirelessly to get help for a young woman she was working for...impressively steadfast and vigilant.

Pentheia Burns, from the Muskie School, who is unwavering in her belief in the power of young people’s voices; and Patty Betters, who has been with Kala Clark for many years, and has seen her through the ups and downs that have taken Kala to extraordinary heights as an advocate and effective policy maker.

I hope to highlight others in other Offices during the summer – and will be meeting many of you, I hope, as the Commissioner and I tour the state and spend time in all the local offices.

Stay tuned – the *Conversations with the Commissioner Tour* is coming to a DHHS office near YOU!

A Customer Shares Her Experience

Recently Governor Baldacci received a letter from a Maine citizen who wanted to share with him her experience with the Department of Health and Human Services. I wanted to share some of the highlights of this lady's letter with you, and those highlights follow. As you know, as often as I can, I share a "Way To Go" message with those of you whose good works are brought to my attention, but the praise included here exceeds even that. Please read on, for excerpts of a letter to the Governor from one of our customers.

"Dear Governor Baldacci:

I am writing to tell you of my very good interactions with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, in particular, the Office of Child and Family Services and to commend to you several of Maine's able individuals, your best assets in service."

"My first contact with the department came with Martha Proulx, Foster Care and Licensing Manager. Ms. Proulx set the tone of respect and inspiration that I would hear in all my conversations with State employees. She listened to my story and assured me that my needs would be met for a timely resolution of my case. From the onset, in our phone conversations, she was attentive, receptive, encouraging and clearly supportive."

As a result of continuing circumstances with a family situation, this lady needed further assistance from the Department. She continues:

"Karen Quinn, a Maine State licensing worker, telephoned me, introduced herself and met with me at my home. Because of the urgency of the situation, Karen conducted an emergency meeting with me. Karen is an astute professional with a pleasing demeanor and very good interpersonal skills. It is obvious that she wants the best for Maine children who need foster care."

"Carol Bocker, a coordinator for CWTI training classes, is an experienced teacher and a wonderful, kind woman who communicated her great knowledge in the laws and practical aspects of fostering/adopting. Through her, I have learned to appreciate the depth of commitment of DHHS/OCF to provide the best care and opportunities for our displaced children."

“Later, I was assigned a Social Worker, Amy MacDonald, who contacted me and met with me. Amy was sensitive to my needs and extended herself diligently and frequently, communicating with me while she and her supervisor worked to help me.”

“Charles Gagnon first spoke with me in response to my initial inquiry about his part in this process. He was polite, answered most of my questions which further illuminated the situation. Michelle O’Ryan, went out of her way to call me to tell me information that was needed in my case had been priority mailed.”

“The Florida counterpart to my Maine DHHS workers told me that I am very fortunate to be living in the State of Maine. *The degree to which Maine has cooperated with the process is unprecedented in her department’s experience.*”

“This is my first interface with Maine Foster Care Licensing and the ICPC Program and it has been an overall positive experience. The child and I have received the best attention and service. I will joyfully be bringing the child to Maine. This child will have been in out-of-state foster care for a total of 92 days. Because of the cooperation between the two States, the ICPC took 81 days for completion, less than 3 months of a predicted, usual 6 – 8 months effort. Understanding the caseload and ongoing commitments that these workers carry, in addition to shortages of staff, emergencies, educational conferences, and vacations plus handling all my phone calls, this is a phenomenal accomplishment and worthy of notice.”

“I am more than pleased to acknowledge and commend these caring, considerate, sincerely helpful, devoted people and their supervisors, all diligent, apt employees of the State of Maine, for their best efforts on my behalf and for the welfare of this one child. My gratitude is beyond measure. Thank you.”

I can’t tell you how pleased I am at this fine example of the embodiment of the DHHS Governing Principles by DHHS staff. Every aspect of our Governing Principles was touched upon in this lady’s experience with us—staff clearly had the DHHS Vision of “Maine people living safe, healthy and productive lives” in mind as they helped her achieve the outcome she strove for. They acted out our Mission, exemplified every foundational value, and their treatment of this family was characterized by our guiding principles. The fact that these concepts are out there, alive in the work of our staff, tells me the Strategic Plan has a solid foundation in the work of our Department. Thank you to all of those mentioned in this letter, and to all those others who serve families like this every day. I know you’re out there.

Brenda M. Hawey



**And “Farewell” to
Diane Arbour, Sharon
Pottle and Carmen
Paquette, June’s
Retirees.**

Welcome and congratulations to these DHHS employees who have either joined the Department for the first time, or transferred or promoted into an existing vacant line. We’re glad to have you here!

Valerie Aucoin
Clair J. Austin
Mary Bailey
Noel Bonam
Dina Blanchard
Shirley A. Browne
Alexandria Cole
Elizabeth J. Cope
Brandi Cunningham
Lisa Cushing
Kathryn Danaher
Erica Davis
Richard Gagne

Dawn Gallagher
Patricia Gilbert
Alvin Ivers
Jessica Jacobson-Guido
Casey Kelley
Shannon King
Sarah Lachance
Ryan Murphy
Ann Nelson
Ronnette Partridge
Catherine Pelletier
Cassandra Perkins
Joseph Perry

Darcy Shargo
Steven Sherrets
Kristin Smith
Catherine Snyder
Maya Dhari Amrit Swami
Flint Travers
Jessica Tyrell
Nicole Vicente
Donald E. Ward
Sally Ward
Vicki Wheelock
Mona Whitworth
Donna Wood

Save this Date:

Saturday September 16, 2006



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MAAR

Technology Tip of the Month—Search For Files Via The “Start” Button (for Windows 2000)

Microsoft Office products have a number of good ways to use the power of the machine to find missing files, thereby freeing up the user from squinting, scrolling, and clicking through lists of files or e-mails him or herself to find the one in question. A very nice search function is available by clicking on the Start button in the lower left corner of the desktop, and from there clicking on “**search**”, then, for any application other than Outlook, click on “**for files or folders**”, or, to find e-mails in Outlook, click on “**using Microsoft Outlook**”.

Searching for files or folders: If you have no idea where your file might be, you can use the criteria in this function to search very broadly through an entire drive, or even your entire computer. However, if you have a hunch in what folder it might be, or that you know the file was created within the last month, and it is a Word file, you can specify that the machine search only for Word files in a particular folder created during a specific time period. Keep in mind that the search can go on all by itself – while you continue with your work on some other document, or go to lunch, or whatever. The idea of employing the search function is to harness the power of the machine to find a file, freeing you up to do something more productive with your time.

So, once you’ve clicked **Start, Search, For Files or Folders:**

1. In **Search for files or folders named**, type all or part of the file name or folder you want to find.
 - a. If you’re not sure of the name of the file, just *guess* – it doesn’t cost anything to take a guess at a word you think might be in the title, and the computer certainly doesn’t care - if the search doesn’t turn the file up, guess again!
2. If you have absolutely no idea what might be in the title of the file, then use the “**containing text**” box to type in a word you know is in the document itself.
 - a. Works best to use the most exotic word you can think of that might be in the file – if you ask the machine to find the word “human” and you work for the Department of Health and Human Services, it will find a lot of documents. Better to type some more specific term, like someone’s last name, perhaps, that you know is in the document.
3. In **Look in**, click the drive you want to search, by clicking on the black down arrow on the right side of the **look-in** box .
 - a. (note: rather than a whole drive, if you want to search a specific folder within a drive, click **Browse** at the bottom of the “look-in” window, click the plus sign by My Computer, click the plus sign by the drive containing the folder, and then click on the folder you want to search)
4. If you want to narrow the search, specify additional criteria, by clicking **Search Options**, and then click one or more of the following options:
 - a. Select **Date** to look for files that were created or modified on or between specific dates.
 - b. Select **Type** to look for files of a specific type, such as Microsoft Word Document, or Microsoft Excel Worksheet, or Microsoft PowerPoint Slide Show, if you know for sure that it’s a particular type of document, to speed up the search by not looking at other types of docs
 - c. Select **Size** or **Advanced Options** to use those criteria, although they’re rarely necessary to use
5. Click **Search Now**.
 - a. you can see the search progressing through all the files you selected in the bottom left margin,. When the search is complete, the number of objects found that match your criteria appears in the bottom left margin of the screen and the files themselves are listed on the right. When you see the one you’re looking for, just double-click it to open, (and probably take care to Save-As the document in a place more easy to find next time!)

Remember, *go do something else while the machine is searching* (could take a couple seconds to a minute or so, depending on how much of the computer you’re searching). No need to sit and watch it. You can Alt-Tab to some other application you want to work on, while the search is on, then, Alt-Tab back when you’re ready to see what the machine came up with.